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Special Attention to Trade Preferences Increases Sales - Pigs Should be Frozen While Hanging from Hind Legs.

(By E. C. Squire, Specialist in Foreign Marketing, Livestock and Meats)

In the sale of fresh and frozen meat and offal on the British markets, the method of packing and general appearance are of great importance. American frozen pigs of light weights, from 55 lbs. to 65 lbs., recently brought about 9-1/2 d. (17 cents at exchange on Feb. 2) per lb., wholesale. Heavier weights sold for considerably less money. If best prices are to be maintained, closer attention must be paid to the proper appearance of the product. The manner of packing, trimming, and dressing with a view to making the product attractive has perhaps more to do in determining the price at which the article will sell than any other factor. This is of especial importance in the marketing of frozen offals.

It is reported that some of the American methods of packing of poultry have proven very suitable for the English markets. It is the common opinion that chickens for these markets bring the best prices when packed "squatted" instead of with long legs. They should be packed in single tiers instead of double tiers, preferably about 12 in a box.

There is at present much more South American frozen pork on the Smithfield market than from the United States. Traders prefer pork from the River Plate region to that coming from the United States. Particular pains have been taken in the River Plate region to improve the type of pigs and dealers there are extremely careful in dressing, freezing, and handling.

The frozen pork received on British markets from foreign countries, except from the United States, is cut across the jowls at right angles to the usual belly slit, thus leaving the glands fully exposed. Frozen pork carcasses from the United States are opened from the neck full length in a straight line along the belly. The former method is much preferred by the British Meat Inspection Service, as they are able with this method to inspect the glands while the pigs are still frozen. In the case of American pigs, the shipment must be delayed two or three days until thawed out so that the glands can be cut open and inspected.

American pigs are very well cleaned but more attention could be paid to freezing and handling. Pigs for the British markets should always be frozen while hung up by their hind legs. To freeze them while lying down results in a badly misshaped carcass. Carcasses that are frozen too rapidly or too slowly on the outside usually leave some animal heat around the bones, which results in frequent discovery of taint around the ham and shoulder bone. These parts of the carcasses must then be condemned. The practice which seems to appeal to the trade mostly is the following:

Hang the carcass with the hind legs about a foot apart in freezing; tie the front legs to the neck so that the front leg is in a straight line with the body from the second joint. This gives more room in packing. It is also advantageous to cut off the front foot at the knuckle joint, leaving only the skin remaining. This leaves more room for packing carcasses closer together for shipping. The carcasses should be covered with a good strong stocking net bag.

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CONTENTS

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